United Nations E/2002/SR.34

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

12 November 2002

Original: English

Substantive session for 2002
General segment

Provisional summary record of the 34th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 22 July 2002, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Rosenthal (Vice-President) ..... (Guatemala)

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02-48930 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/57/73, A/57/130-E/2002/79, E/2002/61)

1. **Mr. Huntley** (Chairman, Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples) said that it was important for the agencies and institutions of the United Nations system to increase their assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories so as to help the Special Committee to complete the unfinished business of decolonization during the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. East Timor having joined the ranks of sovereign States, there remained 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories under the Special Committee's purview, most of them small island developing countries situated in the Caribbean and the Pacific, with particular needs and vulnerabilities.

2. In the course of its work, the Special Committee received information from the administering Powers under Article 73 (e) of the Charter of the United Nations and heard representatives of the Territories, petitioners, other officials and non-governmental organizations regarding developments there. During its 2002 session, the Special Committee had adopted one decision and nine resolutions by consensus, and a unanimous resolution on Puerto Rico. The views of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories were central to the work of the Special Committee, whose sole motivation was to ensure that they could exercise their right to self-determination. Equally essential was the cooperation of the administering Powers, and the Committee very much hoped that its working relationship with all of them, including those which attended Committee meetings only informally, would continue to improve so that real progress could be made, within the framework of the case-by-case work programmes initiated in 2000.

3. A particularly successful work programme was the one for Tokelau, a dependent Territory administered by New Zealand, which had been carefully drawn up to reflect the wishes of the people with respect to their future status and living conditions. It had provided for a visiting mission to be dispatched to Tokelau in August to examine the political, social and economic development of the Territory. In recent years, the Special Committee had sought creative ways of engaging all the administering Powers in a practical dialogue on the future of their territories, with the full participation of their peoples.

4. During its 2002 session, most participants from the Territories had highlighted the need for adequate international assistance, as mandated by a long series of General Assembly resolutions. A subsequent series of resolutions over the decades had called for the participation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the programmes and activities of the United Nations system. In response, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), for instance, and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) had made the Non-Self-Governing Territories in their regions associate members of the commissions; and some other United Nations bodies had granted them observer status or membership; but a more concerted effort was needed to establish arrangements for participation. The Council itself might wish to give effect to a 1998 ECLAC resolution calling for the association of its associate members with the Council, especially since a number of non-governmental organizations already participated in the Council's work.

5. The Special Committee was heartened by the support the Council had expressed for its work and by its recognition that the people of the Territories had to be made more aware of the United Nations role in their decolonization and of special United Nations assistance programmes for which they might be eligible.

6. The assistance being provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was of paramount importance in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in terms of programming, access to regional disaster management programmes, tourism development, financial and economic technical assistance, micro-enterprise development and capacity-building. UNDP also continued to support specific country projects in individual Territories and functioned as a highly effective coordinator of assistance from the wider United Nations system.

7. He introduced draft resolution E/2002/L.15, which had been prepared by the Special Committee for adoption by the Council on the item under

consideration. It emphasized the legitimate right to self-determination of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and, as a corollary, the need to extend all appropriate assistance to them. It asked the specialized agencies to review the conditions in each Territory and to make specific proposals for accelerating economic and social progress, and to give priority to providing assistance in a collaborative and integrated way. He hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted unanimously.

8. **Mr. Renninger** (Department of Political Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/57/130-E/2002/79), said that it had been compiled by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories on the basis of input from United Nations specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions. It described the challenges faced in providing short-, medium- and long-term assistance to the Palestinian people. During the reporting period, the realities and priorities in the occupied Palestinian territory had shifted significantly owing to the rapid escalation of violence and confrontation, particularly in March and April 2002, when there had been extensive destruction of the Palestinian social and economic infrastructure and a sharp deterioration in the living conditions. Underpinning the growing humanitarian need was a fundamental economic crisis that was eroding the capacity of the population to cope with the situation. Domestic production levels had declined 20 per cent, and there were unprecedented levels of unemployment, a 30-per-cent decline in per capita income, and poverty that had spread to some 50 per cent of the population. As at the end of 2001, the infrastructural damage had amounted to over $300 million, while income losses had totalled over $2 billion.

9. The international community was responding to the social and humanitarian aspects of the crisis with a two-track approach: support for the Palestinian Authority's capacity to deliver essential services, and emergency assistance for infrastructural damage and for urgent social and humanitarian needs. Donors, the United Nations and the aid community at large had worked closely among themselves and with the Palestinian Authority. It had been decided to give priority, first, to immediate humanitarian assistance and repairs and, secondly, to rehabilitation of infrastructure and institutions. A regional damage assessment conducted by the newly created donor support group, comprising Palestinian Authority officials, and representatives of the European Commission, UNDP, the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank, had concluded that the Israeli military incursions during March and April had resulted in over $340 million in damage. A separate United Nations assessment had been launched in May to assess the humanitarian damage and propose an action plan.

10. Donor funding had increased dramatically between the outbreak of the current crisis and the first quarter of 2002, although the bulk of the assistance had been in the form of budgetary support. Disbursements for capital and capacity-building projects had dropped by approximately 60 per cent.

11. The Israeli closures and movement restrictions were the single most important direct cause of the socio-economic and humanitarian crisis, and they were also a significant hindrance for all United Nations bodies, notably the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and for the activities of the donor community at large. While recognizing Israel's legitimate security concerns, the United Nations and the donor community had repeatedly insisted on the need to ease the movement restrictions. To help the Palestinian people out of economic collapse, it would be crucial to lift the restrictions on civilians, regenerate productive activities and facilitate the assistance work. Emergency economic and social assistance, however, could not be a substitute for the resumption of political dialogue. There was a remarkable consensus in the international community that peace in the region could best be promoted by parallel efforts on the political, security and socio-economic fronts, a point also recognized at the recent meeting in New York of the Middle East "quartet".

12. **Mr. Langmore** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that the Director-General of ILO had prepared a report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories based on a mission she had sent to assess the employment conditions in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan. According to the report, political security — for both Israel and the Palestinian population in the occupied territories — could not be maintained if it was not grounded in economic and social security. Yet, conditions as

described in the Director-General's report were terrible: income had plummeted by 46 per cent, unemployment had risen to 43 per cent and the incidence of poverty had multiplied, possibly to as high as 62 per cent. The war had also damaged the Israeli economy: the gross domestic product (GDP) had declined by 0.6 per cent after having risen by 6.4 per cent the previous year, and the unemployment rate was forecast to rise to 10.2 per cent.

13. Steps that ILO could take would be to reassess technical cooperation programmes in the light of the current humanitarian crisis and consider new initiatives, to be funded by donor Governments, in the fields of employment promotion, youth, social protection, social dialogue and institutional support. ILO could support the establishment of a Palestinian fund for employment and social protection, as proposed by the Arab Labour Conference, and prepare the necessary feasibility study. ILO could, in addition, explore with Palestinian and Israeli constituents the opportunities for social dialogue, to help create an atmosphere of mutual respect and ease tensions. It was planning to strengthen the capacity of the ILO Jerusalem Office.

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/57/63-E/2002/21)

14. **Ms. Tallawy** (Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/57/63-E/2002/21), said that since the last session of the Economic and Social Council the upsurge in violence had continued and the confrontations had increased in severity. The situation was characterized by Israel's use of heavy conventional weapons, extrajudicial killings and collective punishment of the civilian population. Many innocent civilians had been killed in the bombing of villages or in exchanges of gunfire, in circumstances indicating an indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force. Recent intensive military incursions and the reoccupation of Palestinian areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority had resulted in many civilian deaths.

15. The note by the Secretary-General indicated that the Israeli authorities had continued in the widespread practice of destroying property. Between September 2000 and 31 January 2002, in the Gaza Strip alone, 660 homes housing 845 families had been partially or completely destroyed. Most such demolitions took place at night without any advance warning being given to residents. In addition, the Israeli army had devastated a significant amount of agricultural land; in particular, the creation of buffer zones for the construction of bypass roads and the building of settlements had resulted in the "sweeping" of large areas of agricultural land by bulldozers, involving the uprooting of many fruit and olive trees and the destruction of wells and agricultural constructions.

16. Checkpoints, closures and curfews imposed by Israel had severely impeded access to medical care, education and employment. Each day, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who wished to travel between Palestinian towns and villages had to pass through one or more Israeli checkpoints where they were routinely subjected to abuse. A number of Palestinian civilians, including women in labour, had died as a result of being prevented from reaching hospitals or seeking medical treatment. The severe restrictions imposed by Israel on freedom of movement also had devastating effects on the Palestinian economy as a result of which the percentage of Palestinians living in poverty had more than doubled. Such acts of violence had a negative impact on the psyche of the Palestinian population, and in view of the high percentage of the population under the age of 18, the impact could be expected to have a significant effect on the next generation for years to come. Many Palestinians reported experiencing an overwhelming fear of the future and feelings of hopelessness. Many of the Palestinians arrested by Israel between September 2000 and September 2001 were children, some 160 of whom remained in Israeli jails. Almost all Palestinian child detainees were subjected to physical and psychological torture while under interrogation. While in prison, children were also denied the right to education and to visits from families and lawyers, in contravention of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

17. The great majority of member States regarded Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a violation of the fourth Geneva Convention which

prohibited the transfer by an occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the occupied territory. The settlements had been condemned as illegal by numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. There were some 190 settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip linked to each other and to Israel by a vast system of bypass roads and buffer zones which separated the Palestinian communities and deprived Palestinians of agricultural land. The effect was seriously to hamper the possibility of a Palestinian State as the roads destroyed the territorial integrity of the occupied Palestinian territory. Israel was continuing its policy of building additional settlements.

18. In the Golan Heights in the Syrian Arab Republic, some 17,000 Israeli settlers resided in 33 settlements. Employment opportunities for the Arab population of the Syrian Golan Heights continued to be extremely restricted and those who were fortunate enough to find work were poorly paid and had no access to social benefits, health insurance or unemployment compensation.

19. It was clear that the delays in the implementation of the agreement reached between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization continued to aggravate the living conditions of the Palestinian people and to sustain the current cycle of violence. As the Secretary-General had said, a reduction in the violence was the most immediate priority. The question of security had to be addressed alongside key political issues, particularly the question of land, and the economic and social issues, including the increasingly desperate conditions of the Palestinians. Failure to address those issues would inevitably give rise to further and perhaps deadlier exchanges of violence.

20. Apart from the misery and suffering in the occupied territory and Israel, the conflict had a negative impact on the entire region. First and foremost, the region's socio-economic development was gravely influenced by the Palestinian-Israeli struggle, which was diverting enormous human and financial resources away from development, away from economic and political reforms and away from addressing the basic needs of the people of the region. The continuing delays in resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict were undermining the forces of progress and moderation. The suffering and destruction being endured by the Palestinians and Israelis on a daily basis was inflaming hatred and ethnic prejudices and increasing radicalism and fanaticism throughout the region and beyond. The image and prestige of the United Nations, as well as the principles embodied in the Charter, were being gravely undermined by the continuation of the conflict.

21. **Mr. Ahmad** (Observer for Iraq) said that the Palestinian tragedy was deepening because of the daily aggressions perpetrated by the Zionist entity against unarmed civilians and its destruction and demolition of homes causing the displacement of the population. In the course of the campaign waged against the Palestinian people, what could only be described as crimes against humanity were being committed, and in full view of the international community, especially the Security Council, which seemed incapable of deterring the aggressors and restoring the rights of the victims. A double standard was being applied: when serious violations were committed against the Palestinian people, some Security Council members remained silent; yet those same States were quick to condemn when the unarmed Palestinian people resisted. The Security Council was being tested. If it failed to uphold the principles of the Charter and of international law, the very prestige of the United Nations would be called into question.

22. **Mr. Al-Nasser** (Qatar) said that the document submitted to the Council clearly illustrated the difficult living conditions of the Arab population in the lands under illegal Israeli occupation in Palestine and in other territories, including Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan.

23. When Arab-Israeli negotiations had begun, the clear position of his country had been that the negotiations should lead to the attainment by the Arabs and the Palestinians of all their rights as set forth, in particular, in the resolutions of the Security Council and in accordance with the principle of land for peace. After the Declaration of Principles had been signed in 1993 between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, his country had emphasized the need to reach agreement on the withdrawal of Israel from all of the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and from the occupied Syrian Golan, thus turning a new page in the history of the Middle East and enabling the people of the region to develop and prosper. Unfortunately, those hopes had been disappointed by Israel's daily acts of aggression against Arabs in the Palestinian territory, including occupied Jerusalem, and in other Arab territories including the occupied Syrian Golan, in

defiance of the wishes of the international community and despite the relevant Security Council resolutions which called on the occupying Power to maintain peace in all occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, to ensure the movement of goods, to remove all restrictions on entering and leaving Jerusalem and to desist from the arbitrary measures taken by the forces of occupation against the Palestinian people and against the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan. Instead of heeding those appeals, Israel had merely consolidated the status quo. It had continued its policy of settlement and exploitation of the resources of the occupied Arab territories, the destruction of the infrastructure, cutting down thousands of trees and closing down roads used by the Palestinians.

24. The geographical distribution of the settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories was such as to surround local Palestinian communities, preventing their natural growth, and the roads built by the occupying Power throughout the West Bank had been designed to reinforce the occupation. Israel's policies were in blatant violation of the fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibited the occupying Power from transferring its own civilian population to the territories it occupied. The expansion of the settlements had involved the destruction of Palestinian homes at night without prior warning. According to the estimates of UNRWA, between September 2000 and January 2002 the occupying forces had destroyed some 660 homes housing 845 families. Large areas of agricultural land had also been devastated, reducing the population to abject poverty, and adversely affecting education and health.

25. The health services provided by UNRWA had been seriously affected and the severe restrictions imposed on movement from the West Bank had resulted in a significant reduction in the number of children immunized against disease in 2000. There had also been an increase in the number of stillbirths and low birth weight infants, a reduction in the enrolment of women in labour in antenatal care programmes, and an increase in the incidence of anaemia.

26. While the occupying forces were strengthening their presence in the occupied Syrian Golan, the Arab population was facing a further deterioration of its standard of living as a result of restricted opportunities for employment and education and the unfair taxation policy. Opportunities for employment were limited, in particular, by the fact that travel between the Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic was difficult and dangerous owing to the policy of the occupying Power, which obliged the population to remain where it was.

27. **Ms. Barghouti** (Observer for Palestine) said that, since the report of the Secretary-General on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory covered only the period from April 2001 to March 2002, she would give a brief overview of conditions since that time. In late March, the situation had deteriorated dramatically, with the Israeli invasion and reoccupation of major Palestinian population centres, including refugee camps, and the escalation of military assaults against the Palestinian people. Using heavy weaponry and excessive force, the occupying forces had killed Palestinians, including women and children, carried out extrajudicial executions, searched, raided and destroyed homes, detained Palestinians in mass roundups, obstructed access by ambulances and medical personnel to the wounded, destroyed electricity and water networks, bulldozed roads and destroyed agricultural fields and trees.

28. Moreover, the Israeli occupying forces continued to impose a military siege, severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods and collective punishment on the entire Palestinian population. As a result, its socio-economic despair was deepening and the humanitarian crisis worsening with each passing day. The restrictions and curfews had deprived Palestinians of work, trade, education, access to proper medical care and any semblance of normalcy in daily life. Access to food and other basic necessities had been obstructed as well, and the shortages were continuing. Moreover, the restrictions had prevented humanitarian assistance from reaching those in need.

29. Those serious violations of international humanitarian law had caused extensive harm to the Palestinian civilian population, infrastructure and institutions. At least 1,680 Palestinians had been killed by the Israeli occupying forces, and hundreds wounded. She called on the international community and the United Nations system to strengthen the humanitarian assistance to and protection of Palestinian civilians living under foreign occupation, in an effort to alleviate the grave humanitarian situation and help in the reconstruction of Palestinian institutions. In that connection, her delegation emphasized the importance of the work of the United Nations agencies on the ground and expressed gratitude for all their

contributions to the welfare of the Palestinian people. It reaffirmed the need for the Palestinians to live a normal life, free from foreign occupation, destruction and fear, in their own State.

30. Until that time, the international community must demand that Israel, the occupying Power, should respect the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law and comply fully with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

31. **Mr. Roshdy** (Egypt) said that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, as described in the report of the Secretary-General and the report submitted by ESCWA, was a source of concern and horror to the international community. The reality of the situation and who was responsible for it was well known. The Israeli military action had dashed all hopes for peace, and as long as the occupation continued the suffering of the Palestinian people would continue. Safeguarding civilians was a duty of the international community, and the image and prestige of the United Nations were being affected by the handling of the conflict.

32. **Mr. Saleh** (Bahrain) said that the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian Arab people had deteriorated significantly over the past year as a result of the policies of the Israeli Government. These policies were based on State terrorism entailing the excessive use of military force against the civilian Palestinian population and the imposition of blockades in order to create buffer zones, imposing an economic, social and psychological stranglehold on the Palestinians. The Israeli forces had established 54 buffer zones and had recently made a start on building a separation wall reminiscent of the Berlin wall and the policy of apartheid formerly pursued by the Government of South Africa. The closures had seriously affected the Palestinian economy and increased the suffering of the Palestinian people.

33. The Israeli policies also restricted the freedom of movement of humanitarian organizations that provided assistance to the Palestinian people. One hundred and ninety Israeli settlements had been established in the West Bank occupied by 380,000 settlers, who were being armed by Israel so as to make them into another army carrying out acts of violent terrorism against Palestinian civilians. Israel had killed some 1,000 Palestinians including many children and young people. Israeli activities had included 58 extrajudicial executions in violation of the basic principles of international conventions and the principles of humanitarian law, in particular the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. A policy of destroying homes and property and displacing their inhabitants had continued and had increased in recent months. It had included the destruction of the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority as well as the headquarters of the President of the Authority. The mass violations of international humanitarian law had targeted civilians and prevented doctors from attending to the wounded and removing the dead. Many doctors had also been killed and many women in labour had not been evacuated because of the Israeli blockade, which was another flagrant violation of the fourth Geneva Convention.

34. The economic and social plight of the Palestinian people was clear and could be seen daily on television programmes throughout the world. Even television stations that were traditionally pro-Israeli were beginning to show something of what the Palestinian people was experiencing as a result of Israeli terrorism and the occupation of Arab lands

35. As the Secretary-General had said to the Security Council, the social and economic desperation of the Palestinian people was an impediment to the establishment of lasting peace and security. The standard of living of the Palestinians had fallen over the course of the preceding 18 months, with the result that over two thirds of the population of the Gaza Strip was now living below the poverty line and the same was true of about half the population of the West Bank. His delegation agreed with the statement of the Secretary-General in his report to the effect that a permanent resolution to the conflict could not be achieved unless Israel halted its occupation of Palestinian territory and withdrew its settlements. The ending of the Israeli occupation of all Arab lands, including Palestinian territory, the occupied Syrian Golan and the remaining occupied territory in Lebanon, was the only means of putting an end to the present suffering and of achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace.

36. **Mr. Mekel** (Observer for Israel) said that the issue of the living conditions of the Palestinians was of great concern to his Government. Beyond basic concern for their welfare as fellow human beings was the recognition that the Palestinians were and always would be neighbours, and the State of Israel therefore

had a vested interest in seeing their social and cultural life flourish and their economy prosper.

37. It had long been recognized that the path to the full economic and social potential of the Palestinian people was obstructed by the persistent conflict with Israel, and that potential could only be reached within the context of a lasting, peacefully negotiated agreement with Israel. It was that understanding which had led both parties to the Oslo peace process and the Camp David Summit in July 2000. There, Israel had extended its most far-reaching peace offer to date, one that would have provided for Palestinian independence, self-governance and economic and social development. That offer, however, had received a negative response from the Palestinian leadership, which instead launched a full-scale campaign of terrorism against the citizens of Israel in the hopes of winning even more concessions.

38. Up to September 2002, the Palestinians' economic and social conditions had been steadily improving and would have improved still more if an agreement had been reached. With the onset of terrorism, however, that trend had been reversed. No matter how the Palestinians sought to portray it, it was obvious that their current predicament was a result of the decision to forgo a political process in favour of a campaign of terrorism against innocent civilians. That choice, and the unrelenting waves of suicide bombers resulting from it, had forced Israel to take steps in order to protect the lives of its people, in exercise of its inherent right to self-defence under the Charter of the United Nations.

39. Israel had no desire to see the Palestinian people suffer. On the contrary, it supported international efforts aimed at alleviating the dire humanitarian situation which that people was facing. But neither the Palestinians nor the international community could be permitted to lose sight of the fact that Palestinian suffering was strictly a result of the Palestinian leadership's decision to pursue violence rather than dialogue.

40. The most direct and lasting way to improve the conditions of the Palestinian people would be through a complete cessation of acts of terror and a return to political dialogue with Israel. The continuation of the terrorism campaign would only divert energies away from productive endeavours that could enhance their well-being. Anyone who truly cared about helping the Palestinians would urge them to change course and abandon the path of violence and confrontation in favour of compromise, acceptance and accommodation with Israel. Should the Palestinians do so, they would find in Israel an eager and willing partner for peace.

41. **Mr. Kanaan** (Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)) said that Israel's imposition of severe restrictions on freedom of movement in the occupied Palestinian territory was jeopardizing the prospects for resumption of the peace process. The closure policy had a far-reaching impact on the Palestinian economy: the World Bank estimate that the per capita gross national product in 2002 would be 30 per cent lower than in 1994, at the beginning of the Oslo peace process, was particularly alarming. The reports of environmental damage were equally alarming, as were the closures that had brought to a halt numerous infrastructure projects supported by the international community. The rapid increase in Israeli settlement activities, which contravened the fourth Geneva Convention, was also disturbing. The economic situation of the Arab population in the Syrian Golan was poor: Arab workers had no access to social benefits or health insurance, very little job security and no unemployment compensation. That situation was unacceptable, and OIC shared the concern of the Secretary-General, bearing in mind that the continued Israeli occupation was the core of the problem.

42. The recent twenty-ninth session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers had strongly condemned Israel's refusal to comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and the imposition of its laws and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan, as well as its policy of annexation, settlements, land confiscation, diversion of water sources and imposition of Israeli citizenship on Syrian citizens. It had called on Israel to withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan and to pull back to the lines of June 1967. The Conference had further called on the United Nations Security Council to revive the commission which had examined the situation relating to Israeli settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, in accordance with Security Council resolution 446 (1979). In an effort to find a just resolution to the conflict, the Conference had stressed the need for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital.

43. OIC continued to hope for a just and lasting resolution of the escalating conflict. It advocated a

return to the peace process and to the spirit and framework of the various agreements signed by the two sides. The Palestinian Authority had, despite all impediments, faithfully endeavoured to fulfil its part of the agreements. OIC looked to the Security Council to compel Israel to respond positively to those efforts and to the relevant resolutions. The goal of the peace process could be achieved through peace initiatives and negotiation, rather than by military action, which only encouraged retaliation and resistance. A peaceful solution required a genuine understanding of the interests of the Palestinian people in order to restore their right to sovereignty. There was an urgent need for a change of attitude on the part of Israel. OIC advocated a return to the peace process, in a spirit of justice and with careful attention to Palestinian problems, in compliance with international law and United Nations resolutions. It was fully committed to its continuing role in assisting efforts towards a just and enduring peace in the Middle East.

44. **Mr. Shamina** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the data on the decline in the Palestinian economy provided in the report submitted by ESCWA (A/57/63-E/2002/21) were of serious concern to his delegation. It also objected to the use of the term Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/130-E/2002/79); in reality, it was an occupying force and should be identified as such. The international community had recognized the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and therefore the situation should be treated as an occupation, to which Charter obligations would then apply.

45. Regrettably, the international community had been unable to implement the relevant resolutions allowing humanitarian assistance to reach the Palestinians. Israeli military operations had led to increased suffering, and unemployment was having a devastating and far-reaching impact on the Palestinians. Israel was attempting to change the demographics of those areas, and the international community should exert pressure on Israel to stop building settlements on Palestinian land, in violation of the Geneva conventions. In closing, his delegation emphasized the need to implement previous Council resolutions on the situation.

46. **Mr. Sabbagh** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that the report that was being considered (A/57/63-E/2002/21) contained many examples of the daily sufferings of the Palestinian people and of the Syrian population in the occupied Syrian Golan, and cited many examples of barbaric acts perpetrated by the occupying forces, such as assassinations using a variety of weapons, including helicopter gunships and tanks, and involving the arbitrary use of force. The report also recorded the widespread destruction of homes which took place at night and without prior warning, and of the devastation of agricultural land, as well as attacks on property carried out by Israeli settlers who were stated in the report to have been armed by Israel. Information was also provided in the report on the large number of Palestinian children who had been incarcerated in Israeli prisons, been subjected to psychological and physical torture and deprived of education and family visits. With regard to the settlements, the decisions taken by the Israeli Government were designed to expedite the expansion of settlement activity in defiance of the resolutions of the international community, which regarded the settlements as illegal and viewed the transfer of the population to those settlements as a war crime.

47. In spite of the condemnation by the international community of the Israeli occupation and of its barbarous practices, the Israeli Government had stepped up such practices, killing innocent Palestinian civilians, occupying their towns and villages, blowing up their homes and destroying the infrastructure, including installations built by the United Nations. The observer for Israel had stated that those activities were for security reasons. Yet, history taught that the only means of achieving security was to put an end to occupation. The occupying force continued to attack churches and mosques and to use heavy weaponry against unarmed civilians. One example was the recent massacre in the Jenin refugee camp.

48. In the occupied Syrian Golan the sufferings of the Arab population were continuing as a result of violations by the occupying Power of the most elementary principles of justice and human rights, including various means of repression, pressure and terrorism. Members of the population were being arrested and tortured in Israeli prisons, their land, crops and livestock were being confiscated, settlements were still being built and natural resources stolen in defiance of resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international humanitarian law as enshrined in various instruments.

49. For more than 50 years Israel had practised hatred and racism in their most virulent form, and it continued to do so under the regime of Ariel Sharon, who, far from being a statesman, had always been and continued to be a proponent of the policy of terrorism, occupation and settlement building and an opponent of the just and comprehensive peace sought by all Arabs.

50. His delegation called on the international community, particularly those States that were appealing for the observance of human rights, not to stand idly by but instead to require the Israeli leadership to desist from its aggressive policies, put an end to the occupation and comply with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, the terms of the Madrid Agreement and the principle of land for peace, without which a comprehensive peace would never be achieved in the Middle East.

51. **Mr. Ayari** (Observer for Tunisia) said that the situation in the Palestinian territories had continued to deteriorate, and the Palestinians were being denied access to basic goods, food, health care and schooling for their children. Israel, drunk on power, continued to invade Palestinian territory, causing the deaths of hundreds of civilians through the blind and disproportionate use of force, as would no doubt be documented in the report of the Secretary-General on the attack on the Jenin refugee camp.

52. The Israeli colonization policy was at the root of the problem. In a clear violation of international law, the Palestinians were being deprived of their agricultural land, and a system reminiscent of apartheid was being instituted. He called on Israel to implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

53. **Mr. Alaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that international human rights organizations and the media had documented the war crimes committed by Israel during its most recent incursion into Palestinian territory. The United Nations, including the Security Council, had been shown to be powerless to remedy the situation. He reiterated that the continuing occupation of Arab land in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria was at the heart of the crisis and was in violation of relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and international law.

54. The Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were subject to siege, curfew and criminal repression and were unable to move freely owing to the large number of checkpoints set up to protect Jewish settlements. Such measures were a collective punishment meant to humiliate an entire people and increase its level of frustration and suffering. The United Nations must adopt whatever measures were necessary to force Israel to end the occupation and bring about a lasting peace. To that end, an international force to protect the civilian population was essential. Furthermore, those who had ordered or committed war crimes in the occupied territories must be brought to justice.

55. **Mr. Mustafa** (Sudan) said that the Israeli occupation had severely affected the well-being of the Palestinian people and the social infrastructure of the occupied territories. The continued use of force against civilian populations was in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. He recalled that at the twenty-ninth session of OIC the Ministers for Foreign Affairs had condemned Israel and its settlement policies and expressed support for a Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem. He therefore called on the international community to exert pressure on Israel to end its occupation and guarantee the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

56. **Mr. Hyassat** (Observer for Jordan) said that the suffering of the Palestinian people was the direct result of Israeli occupation and repression, in violation of international law. He stressed that Israel's security concerns could only be addressed in the context of an overall settlement which was both just and comprehensive. The international community must prevail on Israel to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions by withdrawing its occupation forces and helping to establish a just and lasting peace for all the peoples of the region.

Non-governmental organizations

Recommendations contained in document E/2002/71 (Part I)

57. **The President** invited the Council to take up agenda item 12 and to turn to the five draft decisions recommended by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and contained in its report (E/2002/71 (Part I)).

Draft decision I: Applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification received from non-governmental organizations

58. **Mr. Kim** Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation supported the work of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, recognized the important contribution made by NGOs to the work of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and welcomed the establishment of the general voluntary trust fund in support of the United Nations NGO Informal Regional Network. He nevertheless regretted that the Korea Freedom League was being recommended for consultative status. That organization did not meet the conditions for consultative status, and he stressed that the Council must ensure that all NGOs granted consultative status respected fully the Charter of the United Nations and in particular refrained from politically motivated actions.

59. **The President** invited the Council to adopt the draft decision.

60. *Draft decision I was adopted.*

Draft decision II: Quadrennial reports, special reports and complaints

61. *Draft decision II was adopted.*

Draft decision III: Resumed 2002 session of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations

62. **The President** said he had been informed that during informal consultations it had been agreed to amend the text of draft decision III. The words "on the understanding that the conference services will be provided on an 'as available' basis", should be inserted following the words "from 8 to 24 January 2003,". The amendment would have no programme budget implications. He took it that the Council wished to adopt the draft decision, as amended.

63. *Draft decision III, as amended, was adopted.*

Draft decision IV: Establishment of the general voluntary trust fund in support of the United Nations NGO Informal Regional Network

64. *Draft decision IV was adopted.*

Draft decision V: Report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2002 regular session

65. **The President** said he had been informed that agreement had been reached to defer action on draft decision V to a resumed session of the Council as soon as Part II of the report became available in all official languages.

66. **Ms. Ahmed** (Sudan), supported by **Mr. Amorós Nuñez** (Cuba) and **Mr. Andrabi** (Pakistan), expressed concern that deferral of action on draft decision V would create a precedent. Both parts of the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations should be available and voted on at the same time. She understood that the delay was due to technical reasons and would therefore not oppose deferral, but she trusted that the situation would not recur.

67. **Mr. Moret** (France) agreed that deferral set a bad precedent. His delegation supported the equality of all official languages and regretted that the documents were not available in all six languages. It would, however, be unfair to penalize the non-governmental organizations which had been recommended for accreditation because of translation delays within the Secretariat.

68. He believed, however, that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations should reflect on its methods of work. The delay was to a large extent attributable to the excessive length of the report. He noted, for example, that some 30 to 40 per cent of the Committee's report was taken virtually verbatim from Committee meetings. Delegations which were members of the Committee should ask themselves whether so much detail was necessary.

69. **Mr. Zhang** Lei (China) said that his delegation, as a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, was satisfied with its work and hoped that it would continue to promote NGO participation in the United Nations system. He also regretted the delay, however, and stressed the need for all relevant documentation to be circulated in time to facilitate discussion.

70. **Mr. Williams** (United States of America) agreed with the representative of France that the report was excessively long and that that issue should be addressed. Thanks to the spirit of flexibility they had shown in agreeing to act on the first four draft

decisions, delegations had paved the way for the many non-governmental organizations which were being recommended for consultative status to begin working with the Council.

71. **Mr. Roshdy** (Egypt) said that his delegation, which was not a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, was in the awkward position of being asked to adopt draft decisions with inadequate information. He joined with the representative of the Sudan in expressing concern at the need to defer part of the report, a situation which should not be repeated. As to the suggestion that the report was excessively long, he emphasized that it must include all relevant information so as to enable delegations to take informed decisions.

72. **The President** said he took it that the Council wished to defer action on draft decision V.

73. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.